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**STATEMENT BY CARL F. FIOSCHE**  
**FOR SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING HEARING ON MAY 20, 2002**

My name is Carl Fiosche and I am 79 years old. I live in Tacoma, Washington. I am a WWII veteran. I served in the South Pacific in air sea rescue.

I am the victim of a sweetheart scam by a woman named Angela, who I later learned is a member of a Gypsy clan. Angela is probably about 50 years younger than me. In about 4 months we now estimate that she took me for about \$70,000. And she got my house worth more than \$109,000. The damage would have been worse except that someone called Adult Protective Services and I got help. As it is, I had to file for bankruptcy.

Before I met Angela, I lived in my house alone. I have a few friends and some good neighbors, but I really don't have any relatives. Since my mother died about 12 years ago, I'm by myself a lot. I've always been a bachelor. I took care of myself. I drove my car to go out grocery shopping. And I had a lot of medical appointments out at the American Lake VA.

I had a sufficient amount of money that I saved over the years. My only income is social security and a small veteran's pension. I owned my home free and clear. I had almost no bills. I paid all my bills every month on time. I had good credit.

I think it was around the spring or summer of 2001 that I had just gotten out of the hospital for double pneumonia. That's when I met Angela at my bank. When I was in the bank I saw this guy on a cell phone walking back and forth. Later I found out that was Angela's friend, Nic. Now I think Nic spotted me in the bank and told her when I was coming out. When I went out to my car, Angela was in the parking lot. She asked if I was Italian. I had an Italian bumper sticker in my car, and I said yes. She said she is Italian too. We started talking and she asked for my phone number. I gave it to her. That's how we met.

About a week later she called me and asked me to go out for lunch. She said she was falling for me right then.

It wasn't long before she said she needed money. She asked if she could have it for her \$600 telephone bill and rent. I said O.K. I started to write a check but she said she doesn't take checks – just cash. I gave her \$1000.

Angela got romantic really fast. She would say she is falling for me. She would kiss and hug me. Angela said, "I will take care of you the rest of your life." She said, "you don't want to go into a nursing home. I'll take care of you." She said she is in love with me. I said I love her

too. I would say I love you – she would say I love you more, and we would go back and forth like that.

Angela would see me at least a few times a week. She took me to some doctor's appointments. She drove me to the bank. I would take the money out and give most of it to her right then, and the rest later. I heard her on the phone at my house one day, and I heard her say "he would just go in the bank and come out with a handful of money." I sensed after awhile maybe I was being taken. But I wasn't thinking clearly. I was sick and she said she would take care of me. I trusted her.

She would ask me for money but she would never let me write checks to her. She said never put anything like that in her name. She had to have cash. So I wrote checks to cash and gave her the money.

I gave her \$27,000 in cash I had in a safety deposit box. She said she needed \$25,000 to start a coffee business. Later she said she needed \$1,000 for coffee. I gave it to her in cash. One day I asked her what happened to the money. She said they lost it -- gambling.

Sometimes Angela brought a young girl who goes to the 5th or 6th grade. I heard Angela tell the girl, "this is how you do it" and then Angela came and sat in my lap and she would be sweet to me.

I asked Angela about Nic. I don't know if he was her husband or what. She said he didn't care, as long as she gave him the money everything will be all right.

On September 12, 2001, the day after 9 - 11, Angela came over – and when we were just talking – she asked about the house. I told her I was going to make out a Will and leave it to my neighbors because they were good to me. Now that Angela was with me, I said I would put her in the Will. Angela went in the kitchen and called someone. She said let's go for a ride – pick up Nic.

They took me to a house. A notary lived there. Nic was telling the notary person what to write. I sat on the bed – I didn't say anything. I felt sick -- **I mean I was SICK** -- and I couldn't walk so I just listened. I was awake but couldn't comprehend. They said they made a deed and they wanted me to sign it. I said I want to talk to my attorney. They said that Nic knows what he is doing. It will all be done here. I thought they were going to beat me if I didn't sign. I didn't want to sign it, but I signed it. The deed put my home in Angela's name. They never paid me anything for my home.

Back then I couldn't hardly see or read then. I felt like I was in a fog. I was pretty sick then.

Angela did a lot of shopping on my credit cards. She said she wanted everything. She took me to the mall and put me in a wheelchair and left me sitting. When she bought things she would wheel me over and she told me to sign for them. What could I do? I signed. I didn't know what I was doing. She was nice to me. She would pick me up and go to lunch. Hugged and kissed me.

She got furniture, dishes, a sleigh bed, I don't know what all she got. She got a watch for \$2,000. But she took the watch back and got the money for it. One time she left me sitting in the car and had the salesman come out to the car.

Angela told me every place you go you should always apply for a credit card. But I didn't need any more credit cards. Later, I found out that about 20 businesses did a credit check on me during the time I was with Angela.

Angela said she said she didn't have transportation. She said if I gave her \$10,000 she could get a pick-up truck from Nic. I gave her the money. But she never bought the truck.

Angela said you can get money off credit cards. I never knew that before. She showed me how and I got almost \$30,000 dollars that way and gave it to her. I was worrying about how I was going to pay it back. Angela said you don't have to worry about paying it back – just show up in a wheelchair and they will write it off. But **I am not like that.**

The way that I got help was that, one day, I fell down and had to call for an ambulance. I must have said something about Angela. Adult Protective Services came to see me, and then a couple of police.

My lawyer from legal services helped me to file a lawsuit to sue Angela, but she probably doesn't keep any property or assets in her name. I got a protection order against Angela and Nic to keep them away from me. My house will be sold in the bankruptcy to pay all of the creditors. I don't know what the police have done. They never talked to me since the first time they came to see me.